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**The dialogism of ideologies about equality,
democracy and human rights within Finnish
education**

Many voices and many faces

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Abstract

Grounded within Mikhail Bakhtin's work on dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981; 1984; 2012) this PhD focuses on the relationships between meta-discourses about Finnish education and individual utterances in constructing representations about Finnish education. As meta-discourses about the successes and popularity of Finnish education are reproduced, concepts such as democracy, equality, and, human rights have seemingly become synonymous with Finnish education, and, the country of Finland more generally. The articles contained within this PhD summary chart and trace the ways practitioners in education (academics, policy-makers, teachers, NGO practitioners, amongst others) grapple with discursive constructs of democracy, equality, and human rights. The data set used within this PhD consists of interviews I conducted with NGO practitioners, interviews from a conference I co-organized at the University of Helsinki, and, a series of multimedia data (online videos and podcasts from leading Finnish educators and experts in the field). The data analysis methods consist of tools found within discursive pragmatics, including dialogism and heteroglossia, indexicality, ventriloquism, and, facework.

In recent years the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Agency for Education in Finland have conducted curricular reviews documenting the need for more student participation and democracy within Finnish schools. One of the main concurrent questions within all of the journal articles in this thesis, ultimately, is how practitioners understand and express key notions such as democracy, equality and human rights. Here, Bakhtin's work on discourse theory and practice illuminates the constant refraction and metamorphoses of individual utterances about democracy, equality and human rights whilst the utterer seemingly is always hesitantly gesturing towards meta-discursive representations about the subject matters (for example, *Finland is a pioneer of equality, Finland is an example of the best democracy around the world*). Yet, this orientation towards the meta-discursive can be problematic. For example, when considering the critical work on education and intercultural communication stating that one country is better than another can potentially result in speakers reproducing

ethnocentric, nationalistic and/or essentialist discourses. In this sense, discourses about democracy, equality and human rights can themselves demarcate essentialist boundaries which can engender forms of marginalization.

Thus, this PhD is positioned towards problematizing and revealing hidden and/or tabooed representations which may go unnoticed within the vast amount of meta-discourses about Finnish education. Consequently, the final section of this PhD summary will focus on a set of recommendations for academics within education, teachers, practitioners, and policy-makers to consider regarding the triple foci of democracy, equality, and human rights within Finnish education. The consequences for current Finnish education export are also explored.

Keywords: Finland, Education, Democracy, Equality, Human Rights, Heteroglossia, Facework, Mikhail Bakhtin

Tiivistelmä

Tasa-arvon, Demokratian ja ihmisoikeuksien koskevien ideologioiden dialogisuus suomalaisessa koulutuksessa: Monet äänet ja monet kasvot

Abstrakti

Tämän tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys pohjautuu Mikhail Bakhtinin dialogisuuden käsitteeseen (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984, 2012). Tutkimus käsittelee suomalaista koulutusta ja siihen liittyvien yksittäisten ilmaisujen meta-diskursseja ja niiden välistä suhdetta siihen, miten kuva suomalaisesta koulutuksesta rakentuu. Tutkimus koostuu artikkeleista ja tästä yhteenvedosta, jonka tavoitteena on tuoda esille tapoja, joilla koulutuksen ammattilaiset (akateemiset tutkijat, poliittiset päättäjät, opettajat, kansalaisjärjestöt jne.) käsittelevät ja rakentavat merkityksiä demokratialle, tasa-arvolle ja ihmisoikeuksille. Tämän tutkimuksen aineistonkeruu koostuu haastatteluista, joita olen kerännyt kansalaisjärjestöistä ja Helsingin yliopistosta järjestetystä konferenssista. Sen lisäksi olen kerännyt verkkomateriaalia ja tehnyt diskurssianalyysia johtavien suomalaisten kouluttajien ja koulutuksen asiantuntijoiden videoista ja podcasteista, joita on saatavilla internetistä. Aineiston analyysi koostuu menetelmistä, jotka pohjautuvat diskursiiviseen pragmatiikkaan, kuten dialogisuus, heteroglossia, indeksisyys, vertikaalinen dimensio ja facework (kasvotyö).

Toistettaessa meta-diskursseja suomalaisen opetuksen menestyksestä ja suosiosta termit, kuten demokratia, tasa-arvo ja ihmisoikeudet rakentuvat synonyymeiksi suomalaiselle koulutukselle ja Suomen maalle yleisemmin. Tämän lisäksi opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö ja opetushallitus ovat viime vuosina suorittaneet opetussuunnitelmauudistuksia, joissa todetaan, että opiskelijoiden osallistuminen ja demokratia ovat tärkeä elementti suomalaisissa kouluissa. Tässä tutkimuksessa kaikkia artikkeleita yhdistävä, tärkeä tutkimuskysymys on se, miten koulutuksen asiantuntijat ymmärtävät ja ilmaisevat keskeisiä käsitteitä, kuten demokratia, tasa-arvo ja ihmisoikeudet. Tässä väitöskirjatutkimuksessa Bakhtinin diskurssin teoria ja käytäntö todentaa sitä, miten demokratian, tasa-arvon ja ihmisoikeuksien merkitys muuttaa muotoaan yksittäisissä keskusteluissa, ja samalla tuottaa meta-diskursiivisia esityksiä ja johtopäätöksiä (esimerkiksi Suomi on tasa-arvon edelläkävijä, Suomen demokraattinen järjestelmä on hyvä esimerkki koko maailmalle jne.). Tällainen meta-

diskursiivinen suuntautuminen voi olla ongelmallista. Esimerkiksi kriittisen interkulttuurisen kasvatuksen ja koulutuksen kentän sekä kriittisen kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän kentän tutkijat ovat huolissaan tällaisesta puheesta. Heidän mukaansa näkemys, jossa yksi maa on parempi kuin toinen, voi mahdollisesti johtaa yksipuoliseen etnosentrisen ja nationalistisen puheen sallimiseen. Tässä mielessä demokratiaa ja tasa-arvoa koskevat keskustelut voivat itseasiassa tuottaa hierarkioita, jotka mahdollistavat rakenteellista syrjintää.

Näin ollen tämä väitöskirjatutkimus problematisoi ja tuo esille piilotettuja merkityksiä ja ehkä jopa vaiettuja aiheita (tabuja), jotka voivat jäädä tunnistamatta näissä Suomalaisen koulutuksen meta-diskursseissa. Tämän johdosta tutkimukseni tiivistelmän viimeisessä osassa tuodaan esille suosituksia tarkastella demokratiaa, tasa-arvoa ja ihmisoikeuksia tutkijoiden, opettajien, ammattilaisten ja poliittisten päätöksentekijöiden näkökulmasta.

Avainsanat: Suomi, koulutus, demokratia, tasa-arvo, ihmisoikeudet, heteroglossia, facework (kasvotyö), Mikhail Bakhtin

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List of original publications

Simpson, A., & Dervin, F. 2017. 'Speaking from the stomach? Ventriloquized ethnocentrism about Finnish education'. *Educational practice and theory*. 39(1). 5-29.

Simpson, A., & Dervin, F. 2017. 'Democracy in education: An omnipresent yet distant Other'. *Palgrave communications*. 3(24). DOI: 10.1057/s41599-017-0012-5.

Simpson, A. In Press. 'Democracy as othering within Finnish Education'. *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education*.

Simpson, A. Submitted. 'Discourses on 'equality' within Finnish education: many voices and many faces?' *Pragmatics and Society*.

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1 Introduction

The ideas contained within the articles of this PhD, and this summary itself, stem from my involvement in co-founding England's first co-operative trust school whilst still being at secondary school (Simpson, 2014). These perspectives gave me an insight into how the co-operative schools movement positioned itself as a so-called democratic alternative to the increasing marketization and academization of the English educational system. Whilst studying for my Bachelor's degree I worked as a practitioner consulting with co-operative schools in terms of how co-operative schools were developing their version of democracy. Here I encountered the discursive polysemy of democracy as a concept. The more exposure I got in experiencing how interlocutors (teachers, head teachers, parents, non-teaching staff, students) were using this word within educational settings the more it made me realize the word democracy was being used, misused and abused for many different ideological purposes and agendas. Democracy was seemingly everywhere and no-where. Yet, the word often carried a symbolic and representational edifice which shaped how interlocutors understood and practiced democracy within educational settings. When I moved to Finland in 2015 and started my doctoral work my focus was to problematize the ways democracy was understood within the context of Finnish education. Instantly I was hit by a striking amount of discourses about democracy and democratic values which positioned Finland as a democratic utopia. Finland was appearing at the top of so-called democratic indices (e.g. The Democracy Index compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit) yet the polysemy of the discursive construct meant that other synonyms (such as equality and human rights) were often uttered interchangeably alongside democracy. Thus, it quickly became apparent to me that my PhD focus should not be solely on discourses of democracy but that it is also important to pay attention to the ways discourses about equality and human rights are positioned in conjunction with discourses of democracy.

This PhD sets out to examine discourses about the triple foci of democracy, equality, and, human rights within meta-discourses about Finnish education. In essence, this PhD offers a way to trace discourses about Finnish education from a micro-level, to a macro-level, and back again by focusing on how interlocutors express, construct and represent the words democracy, equality, and, human rights within the context of education in Finland. The research focus of this thesis is the strategic linguistic devices speakers use and the specific repertoires speakers use to convey the triple foci within this study. By gathering data from a conference I co-organized, from interview data with NGO [Non-Governmental Organization] practitioners working within Finnish education, and through in-depth multimedia discourse analyses of prominent speakers on Finnish education, the purpose of

this thesis is to show the refraction of individual utterances on discourses about democracy, equality, and, human rights – whilst, simultaneously the utterer is seemingly gesturing towards meta-discursive ideologies about the subject matters. It is important to note that all of the speakers convey relative degrees of symbolic power. Whether this is academics from Finland involved in teacher education and training, practitioners who run workshop sessions within Finnish schools, or experts from within the field of education, the utterances themselves are rich in showing how ideologies function within, and through, meta-discourses about Finnish education. In this sense, the acoustic images engendered by discourses about Finnish education in themselves produce additional referential meanings about the subject matters. Instead of providing generalizations and/or assumptions about Finnish education as a whole, this study aims at contributing to the existing work on the marketization of education (education export and nation-branding) but also comparative and international education, in addition to theoretical approaches in applying Mikhail Bakhtin's work on dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981; 1984; 2012) within education and linguistics.

In order to delineate the relationships between meta-discourses about Finnish education and individual utterances this thesis contains four blind peer-reviewed articles, whereby I am the first author in all of the articles and the sole author in two of these articles. In using and applying Mikhail Bakhtin's work on dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981; 2012) the concurrent trend in all of the articles is the oscillation within the refraction and 'multivoicedness' of individual speech whereby meta-discourses compete within the self for prominence.

This notion of 'multivoicedness' is particularly pertinent in the first article – *'Speaking from the stomach? Ventriloquized ethnocentrisms about Finnish education'*. This paper uses an online dataset in the guise of video presentations taken from Finnish education. Three excerpts are taken from an international conference on democratic education which took place in Finland in 2016. The other two excerpts are taken from a video presentation of a leading Finnish educator at a conference in South Korea, and, a video on education which marks the one-hundred-year anniversary of Finland which was held throughout 2017. The dataset reveals utterances from a range of commentators, including, activists, teachers, academics from the field of education, and, policy-makers from different contexts around the world. In using Bakhtin's work on dialogism it becomes evident that the speakers mark ventriloquism – here, the speakers function as puppeteers to ventriloquized meta-discourses about Finland and Finnish education. For example, when the speakers think they utter discourses about democracy they are in fact reproducing ethnocentrisms about Finland which hierarchically positions Finland as being better vis-à-vis other countries and/or contexts. This first paper acts as an important foundation in going on to analyze in-depth democracy, equality, and, human rights discourses in later papers.

In developing an approach in tracing the dialogism of ideologies about Finnish education the focus then became the types of repertoires and accents used by interlocutors in expressing discursive constructs. By focusing specifically on Bakhtin's work (1981; 1984; 2012) on authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse, the second article – *'Democracy in education: An omnipresent yet distant Other'* contributes in delineating misuses of Bakhtinian concepts in education whilst arguing the case that democracy discourses within Finnish education function simultaneously as authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse. Authoritative discourse is understood as a form of language that is bound by historicity, customs and traditions (Bakhtin gives the example of Sacred Writ). Whereas, internally persuasive discourse is engendered through affirmative assimilation and is modified by one's own gestures and accents. This article uses a dataset consisting of keynote speeches from a conference held on democratic education in Finland in 2016. The backdrop of Finland is significant as many of the conference speakers orientate their utterances towards meta-discourses about Finland and Finnish education. The keynote speakers consisted of educators, academics and experts from within the field of education. The article shows how discourses on democracy are used to hide speaker sentiments, democracy and words such as freedom can be used as interchangeable and convenient synonyms, and, democracy as pathos whereby democracy discourses are uttered for the purposes of argumentation. The central argument of the article is that democracy can function as authoritative discourse when distanced, generalized, stereotyped and tabooed. When democracy is 'assumed' it engenders mutually coexisting yet contradictory discourses which open up the possibility of critique and [re]accentuation— meaning that discourses can be simultaneously authoritative and internally persuasive. The chosen excerpts within the article hint at attempts to totalize and generalize 'democracy/the democratic' within discourses on 'democratic schools', whereby discourses on 'democratic schools' can contribute to cultural othering and stereotyping, as well as, simplistic assumptions about how democracy functions and comes-into-being.

The notion that democracy discourses can engender othering – discourses which hierarchically marginalize and discriminate against people and/or groups through the uses of stereotypes, prejudices, and representations (Dervin, 2016) is the central focus of article three – *'Democracy as othering within Finnish education'*. The dataset used within this article consists of interviews I conducted with NGO [Non-Governmental Organization] practitioners from within the field of human rights at a youth participation conference held within Finland during 2015, and, a questions and answers session following keynote speeches at a conference I co-organized on democracy and human rights within Finnish education in early 2016. The article excerpts show how representations about democracy and human rights can engender othering as the two notions under

analysis, in this sense democracy and human rights, are discursively exteriorized whereby the speakers were seemingly happy to reproduce generalizations and assumptions about how the two notions function. Such demarcations symbolically indicate essentialist discourses whereby utterances about democracy and human rights refer to some other context – seemingly, never Finland. The speakers were unwilling to problematize democracy and human rights as discursive concepts and when confronted by other interlocutors the practitioners strategically used facework strategies to prevent face-threats within the dialogue. The article indicates the types of ideologies about democracy and human rights practitioners reproduce when confronted with the wider societal and/or personal sentiments which may be found within the speakers' utterances.

The multivoicedness of speaker utterances is one of the key themes throughout all of the articles – the idea of multivoicedness is developed further alongside facework strategies in the fourth article *'Discourses on 'equality' within Finnish education: many voices and many faces?'* where the principle discursive construct under analysis is equality within Finnish education. The dataset used in this article consists of online podcasts taken from a Finnish education export company, an interview with a leading Finnish educator, and, an online video discussing the Finnish education system. The article has two central arguments, firstly, that multivoicedness and multifacedness can be combined as a form of discourse analysis, and secondly, Finnish education discourses on equality can reproduce nationalisms and/or ethnocentrisms and can be susceptible to othering the self and others due to the framing of dominant meta-discourses about Finnish education and equality within the country of Finland. The article shows how equality discourses are intertwined with discourses about the branding of Finnish education. In this sense, the article shows how discourses documenting the 'successes' of Finnish education can be manipulated against other countries and/or cultures through the discursive interplay of othering. With the critical work on intercultural education (Dervin, 2016) and intercultural communication (Holliday, 2011; Byrd Clark and Dervin, 2014) in mind, this can be problematic as commentators on Finnish education are happy to reproduce soundbites on Finnish education, and Finland generally, without problematizing the nuances within the Finnish context.

The outline of this summary moves from Bakhtinian theory to a methodology inspired by discursive pragmatics and results. I begin with discussions on Mikhail Bakhtin's influence in the fields of education and linguistics in developing a framework to analyze meta-discourses and individual utterances alike. I continue with discussions on the semiotics of education export as a form of ideology to the effects forces of neo-liberalism have within Finnish education upon the triple foci of discursive constructs under analysis, democracy, equality, and, human rights. The methodology section problematizes five key notions from discursive pragmatics which are used across the four articles: dialogism, facework,

heteroglossia, indexicality, and, ventriloquism which I will discuss in relation to Bakhtin's work on discourse. This section will bring all of the thesis articles together by discussing the research design and analysis of each article showing how each article contributes to understanding the dialogism of ideologies about Finnish education as well as to this thesis. In the final sections of this thesis I outline the contradictions of Finnish educational export ideologies and the implications this has for the triple foci of democracy, equality, and, human rights. Here, I will outline some recommendations arising from the results of this thesis. All of the arguments discussed in this thesis are drawn from the four articles discussed in this introduction.

2 Dialogism in educational discourses: theory and practice

2.1 Dialogism and education

Mikhail Bakhtin's work was translated from Russian into English in the (1981) edition titled *The Dialogic Imagination*. From this point onwards Bakhtin was addressing many theoretical and practical questions across a number of research fields, what Brandist (2002) calls 'the many Bakhtins' (Brandist, 2002: 1), which included educational research. Within Russian-language education research parallels between Lev Vygotsky's formative experiment research method and Bakhtin have long been made (Matusov, 2004). Specifically, within the context of English-language educational re-search Bakhtin's work dialogue as a relationship was beginning to emerge in education around the millennium (for example, Sidorkin, 1999; 2002; Skidmore, 2000; Ward, 1994). The 'tipping-point' in education which resulted in the expeditious growth in publications on Bakhtin in education can be marked as special journal issue on Bakhtin in the *Journal of Russian & Eastern European Psychology* in 2004. Here an article was published posthumous in Bakhtin's name titled *Dialogic origin and dialogic pedagogy of grammar: Stylistics in teaching Russian language in secondary school* (Bakhtin, 2004). Bakhtin here, who himself was a teacher, outlines his philosophy of language through the dialogic relationality of social phenomena (Ibid). The relationships engendered through dialogue has been applied by educators in terms of understanding and developing the instrumental, epistemological and ontological types of dialogic pedagogy (Matusov and Miyazaki, 2014).

In recent times, within educational research so-called dialogic pedagogy has resulted in numerous citations and references of Mikhail Bakhtin's work within education, from literacy education (Lee and Moon, 2013), teacher education (Moate and Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2014) and as a pedagogy for educational logics, practices, and, approaches (Skidmore and Murakami, 2016), amongst others. In 2013 the Dialogic Pedagogy journal was launched specifically focusing on:

'any scholarship and pedagogical practice, from educational researchers, philosophers, and practitioners, which values and gives priority to "dialogue" in learning/teaching/educating across a wide range of institutional and non-institutional learning settings' (Dpj.pitt.edu, 2017).

Moreover, specific ‘Bakhtinian’ notions have been developed from a theoretical position and have been applied in educational research. For example, heteroglossia has been articulated as dynamic forms of semiotic engagements between teachers and learners (White, 2017), processes by which language and identities are continually made and remade within the historical, political, social, and cultural dynamics (Sultana, 2014), as a way of expanding theoretical orientations, and understandings of, linguistic diversity (Blackledge and Creese, 2014), and, as I show within the articles contained within this thesis, heteroglossia can show the social stratification of language within educational contexts (Simpson and Dervin, 2017), amongst others.

A further example is authoritative and internally persuasive discourse. Authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse have been specifically cited amongst educators across the topics of ‘social justice’ pedagogies (Gomez, 2014), curriculum discourses and student identities (Ilieva and Waterstone, 2013), and, how classroom interactions effect the construction of student identities (Janzen, 2015).

However, it is important to note, as Matusov (2007) argues, that a number of educational scholars have misused ‘Bakhtinian concepts’ such as internally persuasive discourse. Some of the reasons why Bakhtin’s work has been misapplied within educational research, and other fields, is problematized in the following section.

2.2 Dialogism as a method: contradictions, misuses and ambiguities

The popularity of Bakhtin’s work in education, and beyond, presents a unique set of problems. As Craig Brandist (2002; 2003) articulates, Bakhtin’s broad application across research disciplines means Bakhtin can ‘offer something to everyone’ (Brandist, 2002: 1). The fact that Bakhtin was writing under Stalinist censorship meant that ‘words with an everyday meaning had prefixes and suffixes grafted onto them and were used in new ways’ (Brandist, 2002: 2). Brandist goes on to articulate how two Russian words would be used instead of one German word when connecting terms, yet, these obscurities and ambiguities were somewhat deliberate in concealing information from those in power (ibid). Then that brings us to the matters surrounding the translation of Bakhtin’s works. For example, many translations (for example, English, Italian, German, French etc.) are uneven in the quality of translation, lack consistency, and include many mistakes (ibid). Then comes the issue of authorship (For example, Björklund in Sbisà, Östman, and Verschueren, 2011), whereby scholars have claimed that work under the authorship of Valentin Vološinov and Pavel Medvedev was authored by Bakhtin himself using pseudonyms. As Brandist (2002; 2003) and Brandist and

Lähteenmäki (2011) articulate the claims and counterclaims surrounding the works authored by Vološinov and Medvedev, as seemingly no common agreement can be made, Brandist (2002) argues,

‘those who deny that these works are the work of their signatories down-play the general significance of these figures, and the distinct perspectives presented in the texts are thereby minimised’ (Brandist, 2002: 4).

This PhD summary mainly deals with the works under Bakhtin’s sole authorship (in Russian and in English). Where other references and/or in-text citations are used from other authors from within the ‘Bakhtin circle’ this thesis agrees with Brandist (2002) that the relevance and significance of this scholarship should not be diminished.

I have included this section to inform the reader of the potential problems the increasing popularity of Bakhtin’s work may present. Indeed, the issues which have been discussed in this section have not gone away. Having had the opportunity to discuss some of these matters at the 16th International Bakhtin Conference in Shanghai, China in September 2017 with experts in the field evidently problems still remain in the translation of Bakhtin’s texts from Russian into other languages. Based on the conversations I had during the Bakhtin conference and the research articles contained within this thesis the next section will articulate the positions I take with regard to Bakhtin’s work.

2.3 Dialogism: my interpretation and application

There are several Bakhtinian notions which are seemingly everywhere across many differing fields of research. This PhD thesis is not concerned with the emerging area of dialogic pedagogy within educational research. Rather, this thesis is based on the most recent Russian translation of Bakhtin’s work (Bakhtin, 2012), and research conducted on the problematization of Bakhtin’s theory of language from the fields of sociolinguistics (for example, Brandist, 2003, Blommaert, 2010, Brandist, 2015) and discursive pragmatics (Östman and Verschueren, 2009; Zienkowski, Östman and Verschueren, 2011). Therefore, my application is focused on pertaining Bakhtin’s theory of, and approach to language, within the context of education. In essence, there are four key notions which are defined and problematized across all of the articles contained within this thesis, they are, *slovo*, *dialogism*, *heteroglossia*, *authoritative discourse*, and, *internally persuasive discourse*.

The articles contained within this PhD, and this thesis itself, often make reference to, or are based upon discussions about, discourse practice and theory. The Russian word *slovo* however does not translate explicitly as ‘discourse’ in English. Here, *slovo* is more akin to meaning ‘word’ in English. So, the question remains: why (in a Bakhtinian sense) has *slovo* been translated as ‘discourse’? To find this answer one must problematize the heteroglossic and dialogical forces of *slovo*. In the (1981) translation of Bakhtin’s work into English Caryl Emmerson and Michael Holquist translate the following passage:

‘Directed toward its object, a word [*slovo*] enters a dialogically agitated and tense medium of alien discourses [*slovo*], evaluations and accents, becoming intertwined in complex interrelations, merging with some, recoiling from others, intersecting with a third group; and all this may form a discourse essentially, leaving a trace in all its layers of meaning [*smysl*], complicating its expression and influencing its whole stylistic profile’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 276).

In this sense, words [*slovo*] are constantly interacting, metamorphosing, and antagonistically competing with other words within what can be defined as a dialogical apparatus of language. Here, dialogism can be understood as a mode constituted by, and constitutive of, heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981, 2012). Dialogism is thus a chain of signification whereby all words are interrelated to all other words. As a result, within communication speaker utterances react to preceding utterances and anticipate further utterances within the over-arching mode of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981, 2012).

Raznorechie (Bakhtin, 2012) or what has been referred to as ‘heteroglossia’ (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984) in Bakhtin’s English-language translations refers to the co-existence of a multiplicity of various struggling language-forms – e.g. social registers, professional discourses and so forth – associated with certain ideological points of view (Brandist and Lähteenmäki, 2011). Here one must delineate the differences between *raznoiazychie* (the diversity of languages) and *raznorechie* (the diversity of speech) as these terms are often used interchangeably under the English translation of ‘heteroglossia’. Brandist (2004) articulates that the process of language formation is brought about through a dialectical contradiction in which historical changes which bring about the unification of the medium of communication also bring about ideological differentiation (*raznorechie*) which the unified language must struggle to contain (Brandist, 2004: 148). Whereas, *raznoiazychie* (language plurality) is the presence of multiple dialects and languages which would be constituted contra to the unification of a medium of communication (Brandist and Lähteenmäki, 2011). In this sense, *raznoiazychie* can be more closely associated with the English-language words ‘polyphony’ and ‘translanguaging’ (for example, Blackledge and Creese, 2014) whereby

enunciators may code-switch between different languages for the purposes of language instruction and/or meaning-making. For the purposes of the PhD articles contained within this thesis, and this thesis itself, when ‘heteroglossia’ appears in the text heteroglossia refers to *raznorechie* not *raznoiazychie*.

A further two key concepts contained within this thesis are authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse. Authoritative discourse can relate to discursive traditions, customs, and, ignorance (Matusov, 2007). ‘Opposed to it [authoritative discourse] is internally persuasive discourse, which is more akin to retelling a text in one’s own words, with one’s own accents, gestures, modifications’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 424). In the article ‘*Democracy as an omnipresent yet distant ‘other’*’ my co-author and I take issue with the word ‘opposed’ in the English edition of ‘The Dialogic Imagination’ found within ‘The speaking person in the novel’, ‘internally persuasive discourse—as opposed to one which is externally authoritative—is, as it is affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with “one’s own word” (Bakhtin, 1981: 345).

However, in the most recent edition of Bakhtin’s collection of works in Russian *Sobranie sochinenij*. (T.3). *Teoriia romana (1930–1961)* (Собрание сочинений. Т.3. Теория романа 1930-1961), in English, ‘Collected works. Volume 3. Theory of the Novel (1930-1961)’ (Bakhtin, 2012), Bakhtin does not use the word ‘oppose’ when defining and articulating authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse in Russian. In the Russian edition Bakhtin states, “в отличие от внешне авторитарного слова слово внутренне убедительное в процессе его утверждающего усвоения тесно сплетается со «со своим словом” ’¹(Bakhtin, 2012: 101), the translation from Russian to English is similar but not the same, the Russian words ‘В отличие’ (V otlichie) translated into English can mean ‘unlike’, ‘difference’, ‘distinction’, ‘differentness’ and/or ‘otherness’, but not strictly speaking, ‘opposed’ (Simpson and Dervin, 2017). Internally persuasive discourse contains one’s other[s] in one’s speech, meaning that internally persuasive discourse simultaneously struggles with existing stereotypes and dogmatic viewpoints, whilst at the same time, it provides the possibility for discursive [re]accentuation and the diversifying of discursive meanings (Britzman, 2012). In the Russian edition Bakhtin stresses that the boundaries between authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse are fluidly antagonistic (Bakhtin, 2012)—in the sense that authoritative discourses and internally persuasive discourses are constantly shifting and metamorphosing one another. Here it is important to note that authoritative discourses and internally persuasive discourses are located within dialogism—the encompassing

¹ ‘Unlike externally authoritative discourse, internally persuasive discourse whilst in the process of its affirmative assimilation is tightly intertwined with ‘one’s own word’ (my translation).

mode of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 2012) meaning that authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourses are never 'one's own' and are always refracted by speakers within dialogues. Due to the forces of (social) heteroglossia authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse cannot be 'opposed' to one another, as ultimately these discourses interrelate through interactions with each [other] generating meanings in the process (Bakhtin, 1981, 2012). Stuart Hall reminds us in *'What is this 'black' in popular culture?'* that the interplay and performativity of discourses cannot be understood simply as 'an upturning of two things which remain locked within their oppositional frameworks', rather, discourses are continuously 'cross-cut by what Bakhtin calls the dialogic' (Hall, 1993: 114). In this sense, through dialogues internally persuasive discourse marks the embodiment of diverse voices colliding with each other (Matusov, 2007).

The key notions of dialogism, heteroglossia, authoritative discourse, and, internally persuasive discourse provide a framework to tackle relationships, from the meta-discursive to discursive speech diversity [*raznorechivost*], in tracing ideologies about Finnish education. Bakhtin's work shows that the movement of tracing ideologies is neither linear nor fixed, if anything, the imagery of a spiral seems apt as both the meta-discursive and micro-discursive are influenced by, and constitutive of, mutually antagonistic yet symbiotic relationships. The context of Finnish education acts as a centre-piece to gaze within a type of discourse explicitly produced by globalization through the marketization of education.

3 The semiotics of education export

3.1 Neo-liberalism and education export

Apple (2014), like many other commentators (e.g., Ball, 2007, 2009), drawing on the neo-liberalization of education systems, notes how increased privatization, competition, marketization, combined with ‘standards-driven’ procedures and measures have become ingrained within educational systems throughout the world.

The globalization and internationalization of educational systems, including primary education, secondary education, tertiary education, higher education, and special education, has become commonplace under neo-liberal policies and governance over the past forty years (Maringe and Foskett, 2012). The increased marketization of educational systems (for example, Molesworth, Scullion, and Nixon 2010; Brown and Carasso, 2013) has resulted in a global educational reform movement based on uniformity and centralization over what counts as important teacher skills and knowledge (Apple, 2001), whilst at the same time, ideologically recasting education through economic terms and market-based policies (Apple, 2006). As a result, Apple (2011, 2014) observes how schools, pupils, educational policies, and, knowledge have become ‘commodified’. In turn, this has created market-oriented teachers whose orientation is seemingly towards standards agendas and league tables under increased guises of competition (Fredriksson, 2009).

An overt focus on educational performance as part of a standards agenda has seen countries vying for places on international ranking tables (Meyer and Benavot, 2013; Sella and Lingard, 2014). For example, the OECD’s (Organization for Economic, Cooperation and Development) PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) reports exert an increasing amount of influence over educational policy-makers (Sella and Lingard, 2014) in the development of a global education measurement industry (Biesta, 2015). At this juncture, it is important to note that there have been many criticisms of PISA and other measurement indicators. For example, PISA has been articulated as a narrow framework of educational values which does not sufficiently recognize the complexity of learning and teaching (Addey, 2017), that the data and data analysis tools used in PISA assessments are deeply flawed (Feniger and Lefstein, 2014), notwithstanding, the deeper theoretical and practical consequences from an overt focus on ‘numbers’, ‘measurements’ and ‘comparisons’ in education (Biesta, 2015).

Moreover, standardized frameworks such as PISA can lead to the reproduction of societal inequalities (Hadiar and Gross, 2016). The link between neo-liberal

forces in education and increasing societal inequalities has been articulated at length (for example, Apple, 2011, 2014; Mok, Wong and Zhang, 2009). Yet, this has not stopped the marketing of educational imaginaries including discourses and representations about spaces, places and contexts (Newman and Jahdi, 2009).

The commodification of educational domains (for example, Spring, 2009; Ball, 2012), including but not exclusive to, the mobility and migration of students, teachers and researchers and skills and knowledge whereby there is fierce competition for educational ‘assets’ (for example, students, staff, educational services and funding) (Bok, 2009; Martens, Knodel and Windzio, 2014). This combined with the fact that supranational organizations such as the WTO (World Trade Organization) (Robertson, 2003) as well as the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) have contributed to the development of an education service industry through the liberalization of global markets (Robertson, Bonal, and Dale, 2002). Specifically, ‘education export’ as a concept or frame of reference is not a new phenomenon (for example, Samiee and Walters, 2002; Robertson, 2003; Codd, 2004) as the concepts of educational markets and educational trade arguably came-into-being following the establishment of the WTO in 1996 (Robertson, 2003). Specifically, two agreements from the WTO start-up, General Agreement on Trade in Service (GATS) and Trade Related Intellectual Property Services (TRIPS) have had the most impact across educational sectors and domains (Robertson, 2006). Robertson (2006: 8-9) identifies four modes of the GATS agreement which articulates the trade liberalization mechanisms within education, they are:

‘Mode 1, cross border supply – for instance, services through international mail, internet, teleconference facilities;

Mode 2, consumption abroad – for instance, students studying abroad;

Mode 3, commercial presence – for instance, foreign direct investment in the form of setting up branches in the territory of another Member State; and

Mode 4, presence of natural persons – ‘temporary’ (with temporary yet to be defined) entry of workers in the territory of another Member State’

(Robertson, 2006: 8-9).

The four modes Robertson articulates in the establishment of an education-al services industry, the centre of which, through the concept of trade, can be marked by what some have called the ‘education export business’ (Kantola and Kettunen, 2012; Schatz 2015; Schatz, Popovic and Dervin, 2015). As Schatz (2015) articulates, the discourses and representations used in education export marketing can engender a number of ideologies about particular contexts in how educational systems and/or countries wish to be perceived.

3.2 Education export as nation branding

Dervin (2012), Schatz (2015) and Schatz, Popovic, and Dervin (2015) show how education export discourses, in the example of Finnish education, can be used to engender representations of national identity whilst marketing a product and service, in this instance, the successes of Finnish education. Moreover, Schatz, Popovic and Dervin (2015) drawing on Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) talk about 'Nationality Inc.' or 'country-as-company', here, meaning that national branding campaigns can resemble what anthropologists John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (2009) have called:

'ethno-preneurialism': project(ing) the cultural subject onto the terrains of the market and the law, add(ing) the reduction of culture to ('naturally copyrighted') intellectual property, mix(ing) it with the displacement of the politics of difference into the domain of jurisprudence' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009: 59 in Schatz, Popovic and Dervin, 2015: 173).

Under advanced forms of globalization research has been conducted on how imagined representations about a given nation are conceptualized as a resource for the strategic marketization of a given locality (Morgan, Prichard and Pride, 2011; Del Percio, 2016a). Nation branding, as a concept, can be understood as being economically orientated to increase the economic efficacy of a nation in terms of capital, tourists, investors, and trade (Papadopoulos, 2004).

Scholars are engaging in critically examining the performativity of nation branding advertising and marketing discourses especially in the ways nation branding can influence perceptions of national, and self, identity (Aronczyk, 2013), and in a more general sense, in the ways nation branding can be manipulated for social and/or political means (Graan, 2016). Nation branding can engender ideologies about nationhood (Kaneva and Popescu, 2011; Kaneva, 2011) and be used to hierarchically position one nation vis-à-vis another nation as well as contributing to the definition of the limits of how nations can be conceived (Volcic, 2008). It is therefore important to pay attention to the ideological and semiotic manifestations of how nation branding comes-into-being in terms of how nation branding is discursively negotiated, constituted, and performed (Manning, 2010; Nakassis, 2012).

Drawing on sociolinguistic concepts such as indexicality (Blommaert, 2007; 2010) and enregisterment (Agha, 2005; 2011) the semiotic engendering of nation branding advertising and marketing has been problematized in a number of recent articles, for example, how nation brand ideologies function as a form of state governmentality (Del Percio, 2016a), how multilingualism and cultural diversity

are constructed as a capital belonging to a specific country and/or context (Del Percio, 2016b), how nation brand discourses can serve both to recruit citizens to perform nation brand identity and also to stigmatize and marginalize behaviors deemed antithetical to this identity (Graan, 2016), and, how nation brand discourses index the other as being domesticated and ethnocentrically determined (Kelly-Holmes, 2016).

3.3 Education export and nation branding: the case of Finnish education

As I demonstrate within the articles contained within this thesis (for example, Simpson and Dervin, 2017), over recent years the Finnish education system has been ‘described’ through a number of adjectives, media articles have focused on ‘the magic’ (Forbes, 2016), ‘miracle’ (The Gleaner, 2017) and ‘successes’ (LA Times, 2016) of Finnish education. A quick search engine query on Finnish education documents Finnish education ‘as one of the best education systems’ (Nordic Business insider, 2016), ‘A Finnish know-how that can be exported’ (University news, 2017), and, ‘an education system that puts others to shame’ (Nordicbusinessinsider.com, 2017a).

Finland’s ‘high ranking’ in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PI-SA) reports on global education between 2000 and 2009 (OECD, 2004; OECD, 2006; OECD, 2007; OECD, 2010) serve as the foundation for discourses on the ‘popularity’ of Finnish education.

There has also been an increased scholarly interest in Finland’s educational system (for example, Sahlberg, 2012). A number of commentators inside and outside of Finland have added to the interest in Finnish education and have supplemented the PISA reports with ‘academic rigor’ (For example, Sahlberg, 2014).

Some of the key factors behind the discourses point to Finnish education being aggressively positioned as an export led strategy by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010), whereby Finnish education is seen as ‘part of the global service economy’ (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010: 3). The Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland focuses on ‘Competition’ and ‘a good reputation’ in ‘developing Finland as an education-based economy’ (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010: 3).

As Kapferer (2012) argues ‘whether they like it or not, (countries) act de facto as a brand – a summary of unique values and benefits’ (Kapferer, 2012: 2). The role of ‘Finnish nation branding’ and Finnish education ‘as an economic export’ has been discussed by Dervin (2015) whereby Finnish education can be viewed through the context of an economically orientated export strategy (Kantola and

Kettunen, 2012). In addition, the role of Finnish higher education export strategies (Schatz, 2015) have contributed to engendering Finnish education as an 'educational hegemonic position' (Varjo, Simola, and Rinne, 2013) whereby the country of Finland is viewed as an educational 'hyper-brand' (Dervin, 2015).

At this juncture, it is important to note the role education plays within nation branding. Aronczyk (2013) shows that one of the four phases of creating a national brand identity is through education and training (the propagation of the idea/concept). Thus, nation branding and education are seemingly intertwined, not only in terms of the implementation and dissemination of an idea/concept (for example, Finnish education as a nation branding product/service) but also in the processes of formulating and problematizing how the idea/concept comes-into-being.

Here, through functioning as ideology nation brands can affect economic, political, social realms through the projection of a perceived national identity whilst at the same time communicating national interests through potentially chauvinistic and antagonistic forms of nationalism (Volcic and Andrejevic, 2011). Nation brands construct the semiotic and symbolic realms of the nation into categories that privilege a particular kind of collective representation over diverse expression, thus nation branding effects the moral basis of how national citizenship can be understood and expressed (Aronczyk, 2008).

Del Percio (2016a) notes the ways nations can engender nation branding ideologies as an antithesis to historical conceptualizations and/or wider misnomers about a locality. Drawing on examples from post-communist countries, some states have participated in nation branding activities to align their reinvented state histories with 'new' imagined ones standing for values such as modernity and democracy—qualities that under advanced globalization are conditions that are meant to attract investors, tourists etc. (Loo and Davies 2006; Kaneva 2007, Del Percio, 2016a). As the next section in this summary shows, ideologies can be constantly imagined and reimagined. It is important to note how discursive constructs such as democracy can be used as part of nation branding images and representations. This research illustrates the polysemy of values such as democracy and how discourses about democracy, and other values, can be used as nation branding strategies.

4 MYTHOLOGIES ABOUT FINNISH EDUCATION

4.1 ‘Educating for democracy: following Finland’s example... backwards’

Meta-discourses about Finland permeate wider elements of the social strata within the country meaning that meta-discourses about Finnish education are influenced by, and constitutive of, other meta-discourses – for example, discourses about democracy. Within education other countries and/or contexts have argued that in educating for democracy other countries should ‘follow Finland’s example... backwards’ (Huffington post, 2011) and that Finland’s students are some of the world’s most well-informed on democracy and human rights (nordicbusinessinsider.com, 2017b). On meta-discourses about democracy in Finland generally, Finland has been reported as scoring well on measures of democracy and the rule of law (Centre for Security Studies, 2017), and in 2016 Finland was ranked number four in the world in the Global Democracy Ranking (Democracy Ranking, 2016) and ninth in the world in the Global Democracy Index ranking (Democracy Index, 2016). In a sense, these indicators on democracy serve to reinforce the ideologies behind the arguments within the media articles.

Such meta-discourses are not exclusive to media articles and can be found within research. For example, taken from Niemi, Toom and Kallioniemi (2016) *Miracle of Education: The principles and practices of teaching and learning in Finnish Schools* Toom and Husu (2016) argue that democracy in Finland speaks as a vocabulary of hope and ‘has promoted the social role of education’ (Toom and Husu, 2016: 50). In another example, Pasi Sahlberg in *Finnish Lessons 2.0* (2014), drawing on John Dewey (1916), argues:

‘Dewey also contended that democracy must be the main value in each school, just as in any free society. The education system in Finland is, as [Seymour] Sarason [1996] points out, shaped by these ideas of Dewey’s and flavoured with Finnish principles of practicality, creativity and common sense’ (Sahlberg, 2014: 204).

A further example on meta-discourses about democracy within Finnish education is Raiker and Rautiainen *Educating for democracy in England and Finland: principles and culture* (2017). Raiker and Rautiainen (2017) say:

‘during the past decade, Finland has risen at the top of the world in surveys measuring the state of democracy. According to Economist Intelligence Unit metric, Finland has been one of the most democratic countries in the world for many years’ (Raiker and Rautiainen, 2017: 9).

Raiker and Rautiainen (2017) go on to argue:

‘These results have driven debate in Finnish society because Finland is not used to seeing itself at the top of such surveys: traditionally, Finns have held feelings of inferiority in relation to other nations. Because Finns do not believe themselves capable of such high rankings, doubts have raised about the reliability and validity of the surveys’ methodologies’ (Raiker and Rautiainen, 2017: 9).

Here one can see how Raiker and Rautiainen (2017) justify Finland’s position of exceptionalism (i.e. the idea that Finland is one of the best countries for democracy) through cultural essentialisms and generalizations about Finland (because ‘Finns have held feelings of inferiority in relation to other nations’ etc.). Here, the media discourses about democracy in Finland as well as the academic discourses on the subject matters can be problematic. As I demonstrate in the articles contained in this thesis, with the critical work on intercultural communication (Holliday, 2010; 2013, Piller, 2011) and intercultural education (Dervin, 2016) in mind, discourses which position one country and/or context as having ‘better’ forms of democracy than another country/context can engender othering – discourses which hierarchically marginalize and discriminate against people and/or groups through the uses of stereotypes, prejudices, and representations (Dervin, 2016). Specifically, two articles contained within this thesis, *‘Democracy in education: An omnipresent yet distant Other’* and *‘Democracy as othering within Finnish Education’*, problematize the ways democracy discourses function as ideology within the context of Finnish education. These two articles show the ways ideologies about democracy within Finnish education are indexed through marginalizing and othering the other.

A further example can be found in the ways humanist and universalist approaches to democracy (and democratic values generally) within the context of Finnish education has been challenged by De Oliveira Andreotti, Biesta and Ahenakew (2015) who show the tensions at the interface of nationalist and global orientations in ideals about the global mindfulness of Finland and global citizenship within the context of Finnish education (De Oliveira Andreotti, Biesta and Ahenakew, 2015). In this example, the authors argue that ‘Globally Minded

Finland' discourses are engendered through a combination of economic, humanist and nationalist discourses that are aimed to promote open mindedness through education and international travel (de Oliveira Andreotti, Biesta and Ahenakew, 2015).

4.2 'Equality starts at the blackboard in Finland'

Media discourses about equality within Finnish education have described Finland's education system as a place where equality "starts at the blackboard" (Teachermagazine.com.au, 2016) and describe Finland's school system as being based on equality (The Atlantic, 2014). Discourses about equality in Finland generally have described the country as the third most gender equal country in the world (World Economic Forum, 2017). According to the Gender Equality Index 2017 Finland is the second most equal country in the EU (European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), 2017) and in another global indicator Finnish women's gender equality in working life is the fourth best in the world (The Economist, 2017). In terms of income distribution Finland has the fourth lowest poverty rate of the OECD countries (OECD, 2016).

In compulsory education, section 2 of the Basic Education Act in Finland states:

'(2) Education shall promote civilisation and equality in society and pupils' prerequisites for participating in education and otherwise developing themselves during their lives' (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016: 1).

Yet, as I show in *Discourses on equality within Finnish education: many voices and many faces?* contained within this thesis, what this means in practice can certainly be disputed.

In addition to the vast amount of media articles on Finland's levels of equality academics have argued that the country's education system focuses on equality of opportunities for all (Ahonen, 2014), and generally, Finland is a country with 'high levels of equality' (Aylott, 2016). Finland has also been described as being 'among the most equitable countries in the world' (Sahlberg, 2012: 21), here, commentators such as Sahlberg (2012) use the words equality and equity as synonyms. In this sense, the words equality and equity are often used interchangeably however the meanings associated with these words can differ somewhat. This is yet another example of how words can be conveniently substituted for one another in order to transmit ideological narratives.

Despite discourses documenting Finland's so-called high levels of equality according to some researchers in Finland, for example, Bernelius and Kauppinen (2012), Simola et al. (2017) and Varjo, Kalalahti and Silvennoinen (2014) educational equality in Finland has weakened due to the intensification of neo-liberal policies within the Finnish educational system.

Thus, one cannot be naïve to hyper-brand (Dervin, 2015) discourses about Finnish education. Despite meta-discourses about equality in Finland Kilpi-Jakonen (2012; 2014) shows that, regardless of current policies and measures, children of immigrants tend to have lower levels of school achievement at the end of comprehensive school than the majority and that their lower parental resources are partly the reason and refugee students have the lowest levels of achievement overall (Kilpi-Jakonen, 2012).

Another issue related to issues surrounding equality within Finnish education is that no coherent agreement has been sought in terms of what multicultural and/or intercultural education entails for student teachers and their future students (for example, Dervin, 2016). Ideological perspectives can differ immensely thus leading to many and varied approaches to the educational integration of immigrant students, with some leading indirectly to new forms of social injustice (Dervin, Simpson and Matikainen, 2016).

4.3 'Human rights are an underlying value of Finnish basic education'

There are a plethora of meta-discourses about human rights within Finland: 'Human rights are an underlying value of Finnish basic education' (Internationalednews.com, 2014), 'Finland is the most stable country in the world' (The Fund for Peace, 2017), 'Finland is one of the freest countries in the world' (Freedom House, 2017), 'Finland has the best governance in the world' (Legatum Institute, 2016), 'Finland is the second-best country in protecting fundamental human rights' (The World Justice Project, 2016), and, 'Finland is one of the most socially just EU countries' (Schraad-Tischler and Schiller, 2016).

Scholars have become aware of such human rights discourses within Finland and described the phenomena as a form of exceptionalism (Pratt, 2008; Krommendijk, 2014; Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2016). Loftsdóttir and Jensen (2016) argue that this guise of exceptionalism is not exclusive to Finland but also other Nordic countries (such as, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland etc.). Browning (2007) articulates that representations about Nordic citizens being 'good citizens', 'peace-loving' etc. engender a form of Nordic identity, in addition to the national identities of Nordic countries, through a particular form of nation branding.

At this juncture, it is important not to suppress counter-narratives to ideologies about democracy/equality/human rights in Finland despite the volume of meta-

discourses about the subject matters. For example, counter-narrative media articles over the past few years on human rights in Finland have documented; the Sámi pride festival moving from Finland to Norway due to antagonisms with the Finnish Lutheran Church (Yle Uutiset, 2016); xenophobic attitudes towards Roma and Muslim individuals and/or groups in Finland (YouGov, 2015); and Finland becoming one of the last European countries to approve of same sex marriage (Human rights watch, 2017), amongst others.

Here, the polysemy of discourses on human rights (and democratic values more generally) within Finland are engendered through the ideological apparatus of symbols and icons (such as; Finnish society is equal; human rights are universal in Finland; human rights are enforced and upheld in Finland etc.) which function through a discursive signification process (Barthes, 1989). Thus, the meanings associated to words (such as, human rights), here, are floating, yet attached to these floating words are fixed (acoustic) symbols and images marking the production and reproduction of ideologies (ibid). Human rights discourses functioning as ideology is not a new phenomenon, Douzinas (2007) notes the Eurocentrism of human rights in terms of logic (universalism) and historicity (in the guise of empire) essentially means that human rights discourses have always functioned ideologically.

Therefore, such representations which postulate the idea that human rights are universal in Finland can be problematic, for example, Finland being awarded an ‘‘A’’ status for the promotion and protection of human rights’ (Ihmisoikeuskeskus, 2015: 21). In this sense, discourses about human rights in Finland raise a number of concerns as to the hegemonic and ideological positioning of Finland vis-à-vis other countries and/or contexts which can engender othering (Dervin, 2016). Furthermore, discourses which position Finland as having better human rights than another country/context can potentially marginalize and discriminate against people from that country/context, in addition to, potentially marginalizing people within Finland.

These examples show how discourses about democracy, equality and human rights in Finland are often indexed through nationalistic and/or ethnocentric discourses and representations. The examples also show how meta-discourses function as a form of social structuring in the guise of ideologies, what Blommaert (2010) calls, orders of indexicality – whereby ideologies are engendered into stratified general repertoires in which particular indexical orders relate to others in relations of mutual valuation (for example, one country having a better form of democracy/equality/human rights than another country) (Blommaert, 2010).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research design and data collection

This thesis is a qualitative study analyzing the relationships between meta-discourses about Finnish education and individual utterances. Specifically, this thesis focuses on how discourses of democracy, equality, and, human rights are constituted, negotiated and performed within Finnish education meta-discourses. Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981; 2012) work on discourse is used as a theoretical framework to analyze the refraction of individual speech and the ideological framing of forms of language. Thus, the articles contained within this thesis, and this thesis itself, involves tracing the semiotics of ideologies from a meta-discursive level to a micro-discursive level again. Bakhtin reminds us that these processes are neither linear nor fixed as one's speech is continuously shaped and negotiated through dialogues with one's others (linguistically, politically, socially, geographically etc.) as well as being conditioned and manipulated by ideological forces.

This thesis is Inspired by discursive pragmatics, here understood as the discursive and/or linguistic turn found within the humanities and social sciences which focuses on the,

‘pre-occupation with pragmatic concerns related to functional and communicative language use conceived in terms of interactional processes and context generation’ (Zienkowski, Östman, and Verschueren, 2011: 1).

Here, pragmatics is understood as ‘the study of how utterances have meanings in situations’ (Leech, 2014: viii). Below is a summary of the main aims, participants, data collection and analyses used in the publications within this thesis.

Table1. A summary of the main aims, participants, data collection and analyses used in the publications within this thesis.

Publication	Main aims	Participants	Data collection	Analyses
'Speaking from the stomach? Ventriloquized ethnocentrism about Finnish education'.	To understand how discourses about Finnish education function as a form of ideology, and, to problematize the discursive strategies used by speakers when uttering discourses about Finnish education.	The webpage consisted of a number of utterances from policy-makers around the world. Two of the four videos were by prominent Finnish academics, from the videos used the other speakers consisted of an employee of an education export company and an activist from Finland.	Multimedia data: 1 webpage 4 videos online 4 images	Discursive pragmatics
'Democracy in education: an omnipresent yet distant other'.	To problematize the ways democracy discourses are understood, performed, and negotiated at a conference on Democratic Education which was held in Finland during the summer of 2016.	All four videos consisted of speeches from activists at a democratic education conference held in Finland.	Multimedia data: 4 videos online 5 images	Discursive pragmatics
'Democracy as othering within Finnish education'	To problematize how the concepts of democracy and human rights are understood and expressed by practitioners working within the context of Finnish education.	Two female NGO practitioners working within Finland. Four participants from the conference I co-organized, two participants of which were academics and two participants were human rights practitioners in Finland.	Qualitative interviews with NGO practitioners taken from an event I attended in Helsinki in November 2015. A transcription of a questions and answers session from a conference I co-organized at the University of Helsinki in February 2016.	Discursive pragmatics

'Discourses on 'equality' within Finnish education: many voices and many faces?	To understand how discourses on equality within Finnish education function as a form of ideology, and, to problematize the discursive strategies speakers use when uttering discourses about equality within the context of Finnish education	One of the videos and one of the podcasts featured different high-profile Finnish academics, the other podcast was of a scholar from the USA who was working in Finland, the video is a publication on Finland.	Multimedia data: 1 video online 2 podcasts	Discursive pragmatics
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The main focus of my research design was to understand how meanings and representations about Finnish education with regard to the triple foci of democracy, equality, and human rights are constructed, how are they negotiated, and how are they performed by interlocutors.

One of the four papers included in this thesis contains research participants whom I interviewed. In the paper 'Democracy as othering within Finnish education' I interviewed two female NGO practitioners. Here I understand interviews as an active qualitative research method whereby interview participants (the interviewees and the interviewer), interview data (e.g., utterances, dialogue etc.) and interview analyses are active occasions in which meanings are co-constructed between research participants (Silverman, 2016).

The other three papers in this thesis use a form of multimedia discourse analysis inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin's work on dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981; 2012) and discursive pragmatics (Zienkowski, Östman, and Verschueren, 2011) (to analyze different media formats (videos, podcasts, websites, images). The multimedia data sources consisted of speeches (presentations or interviews) with leading Finnish educators, podcasts published by a Finnish education export company which contained interviews with academics (Finnish and International), speeches (in the form of presentations) by academics, activities, and professionals from within Finnish education export at a democratic education conference held in Finland during 2016, and, other relevant high-profile media articles which are often cited or/and referenced on meta-discourses about Finnish education. The research focus and specific questions for each publication were derived from analyzing the data first. The data was selected first based on the relevance of the high-profile speakers' presentations about the contexts of Finnish education and Finnish education export, or, a specific concept (e.g., democracy or equality). After the data was selected the focus was on developing an empirically robust method inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin and discursive pragmatics – from which research questions, arguments, and results would be informed by.

5.2 Data analysis tools

This section articulates five key concepts which either provide the theoretical basis of all of the articles (in the case of dialogism, heteroglossia, and indexicality) or which are used as specific research instruments in particular papers (for example, ventriloquism and facework). Yet my understanding and application of these concepts is always oriented through Bakhtin's work on discourse (Bakhtin, 1981, 2012).

As Bakhtin reminds us words [slovo] are constantly interacting, metamorphosing, and antagonistically competing with other words within what can be defined as a dialogical apparatus of language. Here, dialogism can be understood as a mode constituted by the over-arching force of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981, 2012).

Raznorechie (Bakhtin, 2012) or what has been referred to as 'heteroglossia' (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984) in Bakhtin's English-language translations refers to the co-existence of a multiplicity of various struggling language-forms – e.g. social registers, professional discourses and so forth – associated with certain ideological points of view (Brandist and Lähteenmäki, 2011). In this sense, the utterances contained within the self are never entirely one's own, as they are negotiated, constituted and performed by and in relation to the other (Bakhtin, 1981; 2012). Yet, in this sense, one's utterances can be oriented towards and/or manipulated by perceptions of the other.

In providing a way to trace the functions of ideologies, inspired by Goffman's (1981) work on footing, Blommaert articulates that shifts in pragmatic criteria can be understood as "footing": delicate changes in speaker position that were accompanied by shifts in linguistic and semiotic mode and redefined the participant roles in the interaction' (Blommaert, 2007:119). Goffman describes changes in footing as 'a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance' (Goffman, 1981:128). In this sense, the utterances speakers utter and the ways speakers manage their utterances can index (point to) the functioning of ideologies. Here, orders of indexicality refers to types of semiotic practices which illuminate meta-pragmatic language systems whilst simultaneously pointing towards predictable semiotic directions (e.g., the use and function of linguistic registers) (Silverstein, 2003; Agha, 2005; Blommaert, 2007).

On the concept of ventriloquism, Bakhtin does not explicitly use the word 'ventriloquize' (from the Latin *venter* (belly) and *loqui* (speak), i.e. to speak from the stomach) in his works. Cooren and Sandler (2014) show how the words 'ventriloquist/ventriloquism/ventriloquation/ventriloquized' have been adopted by the English translators of *Discourse in The Novel* (Bakhtin, 1981) as the words

themselves are not used by Bakhtin in his Russian texts. Nonetheless, as Tannen (2004) notes, a number of scholars have cited Bakhtin on the uses of discursive ventriloquism as ‘Bakhtin in spirit’ when conducting work on the uses of ventriloquism in discourse (Tannen, 2004). Tannen defines ventriloquism as a ‘special case of constructed dialogue in that a ventriloquizing speaker animates another’s voice in the presence of that other’ (Tannen, 2004: 402). Ventriloquism here can be used as a tool to map the voice diversity found within the speech of enunciators (Cooren, 2013).

Another way one can trace the interplay of many voices within discourse is through understanding the pragmatic function of the face (Haugh, 2013). The face is a concept of interpersonal pragmatics (Arundale, 2013; Haugh, 2013; Locher, 2015) whereby speakers alter and shift ‘their’ face[s] depending on the types, contexts and situations of dialogues (Haugh, 2013).

Drawing on Goffman (1955) Brown & Levinson articulate the concept of face as:

‘something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate (and assume each other’s cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987:61).

Goffman (2003) articulates facework as ‘the actions taken by a person to make whatever [s]he is doing consistent with face. Face-work serves to counteract “incidents”—that is, events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face (Goffman, 2003:8)’. Facework thus can be a particularly relevant strategic device within interpersonal dialogues such as interviews.

In sum, this methodological framework inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin in combining tools from discursive pragmatics and sociolinguistics provides the basis for the four articles contained within this thesis.

6 SUMMARY OF THE PAPERS

6.1 Speaking from the Stomach? ventriloquized ethnocentrisms about Finnish education

The paper examines the interplay and performativity of discourses about Finnish education. Inspired by Bakhtin's work on dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981; 2012) the paper shows that despite Finland's drop in PISA ranking tables media interest and discourses about Finnish education are seemingly as popular as ever.

In specifically situating the study within the context of Finnish education export, and more generally, within the neo-liberalization of education systems and country nation branding the paper illuminates problems in using education export as a form of nation branding. In illustrating this point, the paper draws on excerpts from a website on Finnish education export and three video presentation excerpts from keynote speakers at a democratic education conference held in Finland in 2016. The speakers in these videos consist of an employee of the Finnish education export website mentioned earlier, an educational activist from Finland, and, a leading Finnish academic from the field of education. In deconstructing the speakers' utterances the paper articulates that behind meta-discourses describing the 'successes' of the Finnish educational system lies a ventriloquized form of discourse – whereby discourses about 'Finnish education' contain a number of automatically generated responses uttered by the speakers. With the critical work on intercultural education (Dervin, 2016) and intercultural communication (Dervin and Liddicoat, 2013) in mind, ventriloquized discourses about Finnish education can be problematic. The results of the study show how Finnish nation branding discourses function as ventriloquism in covering up ethnocentric logics and sentiments. Ventriloquism, here, is achieved through a number of discursive means, including, (re)producing international discourses on the successes of Finnish education at international education conferences, through the way others are perceived and discussed at education conferences, and, generally, the way others are discussed within the Finnish context. In this sense, ethnocentrisms become ventriloquized when they are refracted among the meta-discourses on Finland and Finnish education, thus, at first glance ventriloquized ethnocentrisms can go undetected. The implications of ventriloquized ethnocentrisms within Finnish education is that such discourses can marginalize and discriminate against people and/or groups by generalizing and stereotyping representations about Finland, and others.

6.2 Democracy in education: An omnipresent yet distant Other

This paper problematizes the idea of democracy as being both floating and polysemic. Democracy can also be a conveniently loose term that can be used by some to position themselves above others and to ‘teach them’ lessons about how to ‘do’ democracy, often creating unjustified hierarchies and moralistic judgements. Based on Mikhail Bakhtin’s concepts of ‘authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse’, this article examines how the contested idea of democracy is constructed and negotiated.

The data used in the paper consists of four videos used from an international democratic education conference held in Finland during 2016. Three of the four videos were keynote presentations from the conference. The other video analysed was a questions and answers session following a keynote speech. All of the speakers in the excerpts came from outside of the Finnish context, yet, seemingly all of the speakers were gesturing towards meta-discursive representations about the country of Finland and Finnish education (for example, Finland has a strong sense of democracy, Finland has high levels of equality etc.).

The data shows attempts to totalize and generalize ‘democracy/the democratic’ within discourses on ‘democratic schools’, whereby discourses on ‘democratic schools’ can contribute to cultural othering and stereotyping, as well as, simplistic assumptions about how ‘democracy’ functions and comes-into-being. In many instances discussed in the paper, speakers on democracy have ‘described’ notions of ‘freedom’—it is important to note that freedom and democracy are not the same thing—many speakers in this paper describe ‘freedom’, but democracy requires antagonisms and instability (Rancière, 2007), and a contingency of force and power (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001) —meaning that ‘democracy’ cannot be simply reduced to another sign or concept (such as freedom).

Thus, democracy can function as authoritative discourse when distanced, generalized, stereotyped and tabooed. When democracy is ‘assumed’ it engenders mutually coexisting yet contradictory discourses which open up the possibility of critique and [re]accentuation— meaning that discourses can be simultaneously authoritative and internally persuasive.

With the critical work on intercultural education (Dervin, 2016) and intercultural communication (Byrd Clark and Dervin, 2014) in mind, this article demonstrates that there is a need to reaccentuate democracy as something to be problematized rather than expressing democracy as a mere simplistic answer. Bakhtinian dialogism represents a powerful tool to counter-attack such problematic and ethically questionable uses of the word in education and to make it less distanced.

6.3 Democracy as othering within Finnish education

The paper offers a deeper gaze within Finnish education by looking at the ways the word democracy is uttered by practitioners within the field of education. Within Finnish education democracy discourses are present in policy documents, teacher training resources, and, national curricular documents. It is therefore important to deconstruct the ways practitioners utter and use the word democracy as the speakers themselves carry symbolic significance in how other interlocutors (teachers, students etc.) are influenced by their utterances. Inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin (1981; 2012) the paper focuses on heteroglossic discourse functions to uncover cultural stereotyping and othering in terms of how democracy discourses are discussed and expressed within the context of Finland.

The data used in this paper consists of two different forms of data collection. One of the excerpts analyzed is taken from a conference I co-organized on democracy and human rights. This dialogue offers a rare insight into the dialogues between human rights practitioners within Finland, international scholars, and experts in the field. The other excerpt analyzed focuses on the utterances of NGO [Non-Governmental Organization] practitioners being confronted by an other – in this instance, me (a non-Finnish citizen living in Finland) at a youth participation conference within Finland during 2015. In this excerpt, I play the role of a ‘devil’s advocate’ in the conversation whereby I contest the narratives and ideologies presented by the speakers.

The results show that within Finland it would appear that educational and human rights practitioners need to do much more, in terms of how democracy is discussed and what this means for society. These excerpts show that discourses on democracy and human rights uttered by practitioners within the field of education can contribute to othering. Othering can marginalize and discriminate against sections of Finnish society in addition to presenting Finland as superior to other countries and/or contexts which can engender forms of marginalization and discrimination.

Discourses of how one country and/or context has ‘better’ democracy and human rights than another can be deeply problematic as they can index nationalistic and/or ethnocentric representations about, not only, how democracy and human rights can be understood and practiced, but also, how representations about particular contexts can be manipulated as a form of ideology. In this sense, reproducing representations that one country/context has a ‘better’ form of democracy vis-à-vis another country/context can potentially lead to human rights abuses within that context as counter-narratives to dominant meta-discourses may go undetected or be suppressed as such discourses may not be favorable for nation branding purposes.

6.4 Discourses on equality within Finnish education: many voices and many faces?

Inspired by discursive pragmatics this paper combines Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia with facework strategies to show the simultaneity of multivoicedness and multifacedness. These two notions are here combined as form of discourse analysis to indicate speaker sentiments through focusing on the indexical features of words. To show the discursive interplay of multivoicedness and multifacedness I analyze discourses on equality within Finnish education.

Through analyzing discourses on equality within meta-discourses surrounding Finnish education the paper illustrates the functional simultaneity of multivoicedness and multifacedness as a way to potentially uncover speaker sentiments (such as, ethnocentric attitudes within speaker utterances). The paper does not attempt to generalize discourses on equality in Finland, but rather, to show how multivoicedness and multifacedness can potentially trace the meanings and sentiments of speaker utterances. The corpora selected includes speakers who are often cited and/or referenced on Finnish education in the guise of video and podcast interviews found online.

From the data analyzed, this paper raises a number of concerns as to how so-called 'educational experts' and 'educational scholars' discuss the concept of 'equality' within Finnish education. A closer analysis of the discourses built within these meta-discourses reveals a number of simultaneously coexistent yet refracted utterances characteristic of the many voices within one's own speech (Bakhtin, 1981). Here it is important to note how discourses 'documenting' the levels of equality in Finland and the 'successes' of Finnish education system can be intertwined and manipulated against other countries and/or 'cultures' through the discursive interplay of othering (Dervin, 2016). In this sense, it is important to chart the multivoicedness and multifacedness of texts and speech rather than merely reproducing meta-discursive constructs (for example, 'soundbites' on the successes of Finnish education, and, how Finland is a 'socialist utopia'). For the purposes of this paper Finland is used for the excerpts which I chose to analyze but the issues problematized in this paper are not confined to the Finnish context. Within the Finnish context, as with many other contexts, nationalistic and/or ethnocentric sentiments can be engendered within and between intercultural and interpersonal encounters.

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF FINNISH EDUCATION

Inspired by Bakhtin (1981; 2012) and through applying concepts from discursive pragmatics (Zienkowski, Östman, and Verschueren, 2011) and sociolinguistics (Blommaert, 2010) dialogism, here, has been shown as a method which can trace the many voices contained within individual utterances and meta-discursive ideologies alike. Bakhtinian dialogism thus serves as a method to analyze the relationships between the meta-discursive and the micro-discursive. The main focus of this thesis is to show how the discursive constructs of democracy, equality, and human rights are constituted, negotiated and performed within the context of Finnish education. The articles contained within this thesis, and this thesis itself, demonstrate that the discursive constructs of democracy, equality, and human rights are not merely intertwined within discourses about Finnish education, rather, in fact, through nation branding strategies these discursive constructs function complicity in setting agendas and framing ideologies about the country of Finland. The framing of these ideologies functions in a multiplicity of ways. Within the context of Finland this can be dangerous as discourses about Finland's presumed superiority within the fields of democracy, equality, and human rights can sanitize marginal voices and engender forms of discrimination if the voices of the counter-narratives are suppressed. Outside the context of Finland these issues can be problematic too as Finland's so-called ranking on issues of democracy, equality, and human rights can create a never-ending game of nation-centric comparisons of how one country/context is better or worse than the other.

The critical work on intercultural education (Piller, 2011; Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Dervin, 2016; Dervin & Gross, 2016; Dasli & Diaz, 2017) and intercultural communication (Holliday, 2010, 2013; Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014) show the ways fluid notions of identity (national and self) are constructed through discourse. At this juncture, it is important to note that the works cited above chart the ways ideologies (in the form of stereotypes, amongst others) can manipulate representations about people/groups/countries/contexts etc. in order to serve socio-political agendas and purposes. Whether such purposes will be outwardly and publically nationalistic/ethnocentric/discriminatory can be debated. Yet, as this thesis shows, through the semiotics of nation branding, the subtle, the covert, and the hidden can be problematic. In this sense, through Bakhtin's work on dialogism (1981; 2012) and the critical work on intercultural education and intercultural communication mentioned above, it is important to recognize the ways representations about the self and the other are contained in the discourses

one utters. As I demonstrate in the articles contained in this thesis, and this thesis itself, the other can be ‘othered’ through essentialist representations and stereotypes.

7.1 Democracy as a concept to be problematized?

One of the ways the other can be ‘othered’ through discourse is what I call ‘democratic othering’. Here, representations about democracy are used to situate one context over another (usually through essentialist discourses). Thus, marginalization is engendered whereby the other is distanced and tabooed (and often stigmatized), whilst, one particular locality is hegemonically positioned as having the best form of democracy and is thus worshipped. For example, Dervin (2016) discusses and problematizes these processes in the context of human rights discourses.

Here it is important to delineate some theoretical considerations in the function and practice of democracy as a concept. In moving beyond ‘rationalist’ (Habermas, 2015) and ‘universalist’ (Rawls, 2005) understandings of democracy (and democratic values more generally speaking) Chantal Mouffe (2005a; 2005b; 2013) problematizes democracy ontologically from the position of the political. Here, the political is understood as being constituted by a number of simultaneously contradictory, ambiguous and antagonistic forces (Mouffe, 2013). Mouffe argues that liberal approaches to democracy are blind to the political as liberalism, through universalism and rationalism, essentialises being as presence – thus, engendering a politics of ‘us versus them’ (Ibid). In this sense, Mouffe’s focus on the political acknowledges the permanent coexistence and irreducibility of forces within democratic societies, and indeed, within the concept of democracy itself in terms of how democracy comes-into-being (Ibid).

Mouffe’s work on the political shows how democracy and democratic values (such as equality and human rights) are constantly unstable and fluidly interactive. In this sense, Mouffe argues against conceptualizing democracy as something which is totalized, universal or as something which can be understood as an end. In echoing Rancière (2007) democracy should be understood as a beginning rather than an end.

The papers within this thesis call for democracy to be understood within Finnish education, and beyond, as something to be problematized rather than a mere simplistic answer or soundbite. Interlocutors within the context of Finnish education including, academics, teachers, practitioners, and policy-makers need to move democracy discourses away from representations about Finnish exceptionalism and Finnish nation branding. This thesis calls for the engagement

of critical research towards democratic practice and theory in problematizing the relevance and significance of democracy within society and in terms of how democracy is actually understood within Finland.

7.2 Equality for all?

In continuing the methodological framework of this thesis, the dialogism of discourses about equality within Finnish education has shown that beyond media generated articles about the subject matter lies a much more complex picture than what is being reported on. In recent times, the amount of media generated articles about equality within Finnish education, and Finland more generally, has increased exponentially.

As with democracy, with the critical work on intercultural education (Piller, 2011; Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Dervin, 2016; Dervin & Gross, 2016; Dasli & Diaz, 2017) and intercultural communication (Holliday, 2010, 2013; Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014) in mind, through nation branding, discourses which position the country of Finland as having more equality than other countries/contexts can be deeply problematic. The fact that ethnocentric discourses and sentiments are at the heart of Finnish nation branding can reflect an ethnocentric view of equality – which in a sense, runs contra to the idea of equality. Equality cannot mean equality for all if it is ethnocentrically determined by state boundaries or by nation branding discourses. Thus, if discourses about equality within Finland are framed through the idea of the nation-state and are ethnocentrically determined, then in a sense, it seems like you can only be a member of Finnish equality if you are Finnish. As a result, one is left with a number of unresolved questions: Does Finnish equality apply to non-Finnish citizens living in Finland? If being Finnish is a determinant of Finnish equality, what does it mean to be Finnish? Thus, the ethnocentric framing of equality discourses within Finland seemingly goes undetected which can engender possible inequalities within the country due to the fact that marginal voices may not be heard.

This thesis also raises some theoretical considerations of how equality is understood within Finnish education, and beyond. Ernesto Laclau identifies the incompatibility of equality and how equality can be viewed as a utopian ideal, Laclau argues:

‘Not only do I think these two notions [equality and difference] are incompatible but I would even add that the proliferation of differences is the precondition for the expansion of the logic of equality. To say that two things are equal - i.e., equivalent to each other in some respects – presupposes they are different from each other in some respects

(otherwise there would be no equality but identity)’ (Butler, Laclau and Laddaga, 1997:5).

On the notion of exclusion within societies Laclau goes on to argue, ‘I agree with you that the idea of total equality is unreachable, and, also, that a society without any kind of exclusion would be a psychotic universe’ (Butler, Laclau and Laddaga, 1997: 6). These considerations mean that the logic the concept of equality is founded upon can be problematic and somewhat contradictory. In the sense that equality seemingly needs an unequal other in order to be constituted.

The fact that equality within Finnish education, and Finland generally, is uttered as a universal fact can reflect a utopian vision of equality - in the sense that equality can never be actualized. Such discourses about equality within Finland can act as a mask in covering up inequalities within the Finnish education system, and within Finland generally. It is therefore important for academics, teachers, practitioners, and policy-makers within Finnish education to be aware of the problematic uses of equality discourses and the wider implications this has for Finnish society.

7.3 Human rights for whom by whom?

Within intercultural education human rights can be problematic in terms of who human rights speak for, in terms of who delineated the concept of human rights in the first place, and, through what ideology human rights are positioned (Dervin, 2016). If human rights are conceived by the Eurocentric, predominantly white, male dominated, and, economically privileged then human rights will only be symbolically engendered through these frames. In this sense, human rights discourses can be hegemonically framed in terms of how they shape the content and scope of discussions about human rights within a given context.

Like democracy and equality discourses, this thesis shows that human rights discourses within the context of Finnish education, and about the country of Finland generally, are seemingly everywhere. Yet, many of these discourses are oriented towards describing Finland as a country with the best human rights. When one works this back to a theoretical understanding of human rights notions of one country having better human rights than another can be deeply problematic.

Douzinis (2007; 2013) reminds us of the human rights paradox where in the age of seemingly universal rights for all has actually perpetuated an epoch of ‘massacre, genocide and ethnic cleansing’ (Douzinis: 2013: 51). Within this study many of the speakers within the articles proclaim the universality of human rights throughout the world – in sum, this is fictitious. From the invasion of privacy by

telecommunications and national security agencies, to illegal wars and the displacement of millions of women, children and families around the world, to capital punishment, the sexual harassment of women, and failure to acknowledge and recognize LGBT rights throughout the world, amongst other human rights issues, these are just some of the ways human rights are continually abused every day throughout the world. Here in an ideological sense human rights discourses are positioned to convince the privileged that they have human rights whilst positioning the inferior other (e.g., humanitarian disasters in Africa) as a being deprived of human rights or as someone who is in need of a savior who will 'give them' such freedoms and liberties.

Douzinis (2002) argues that the idea of human rights functions as ideology in that at the heart of human rights, as a concept, is a paradox – between the individual and the universal. Thus, the failure of human rights to acknowledge the individual means that human rights discourses can only be oriented from the position of the universal and/or the general. Douzinis (2002) argues:

‘And here we reach the crux of the matter: once we move from group claims to individual struggle for recognition, to the continuous conversation with others and social institutions which constructs our identity, the law will always fall short of a full recognition of identity. It may recognize aspects of my sexuality, ethnicity, and family position through the creation of some rights and protections. But the politics of difference will still remain wedded to the generality of positions, to that of being woman or gay rather than this woman or that gay. The law can only deal with universalities and generalities’ (Douzinis, 2002:402).

With these considerations in mind it is important for actors within Finnish education to be aware of how human rights practitioners within Finnish schools can be positioning human rights discourses through a number of ideologies (for example, about the universality of human rights). These discourses and representations can be intertwined with essentialist representations and, thus, can mark othering whereby others can be marginalized and discriminated against through human rights discourses. Seemingly a deeper problematization of what human rights are and how they are practiced within the context of Finnish education is required. There is thus a need to reaccentuate human rights discourses away from ethnocentrism about Finnish education to a concept which can be problematized by all sections of Finnish society.

7.4 Recommendations

This study has discussed the problems of ethnocentrically framed discourses within the era of Finnish education export and Finnish nation branding. If educationalists within Finnish education are truly committed to democracy, equality, and human rights then it is important to recognize and develop ways interlocutors within Finnish education can be self-reflexive of their own utterances and the utterances of others in detecting and preventing essentialist representations and the notion of othering. Some of this work has already started to happen (see Dervin, Simpson and Matikainen, 2016), yet, further work is needed to make discourse-based tools available for teachers and trainee teachers within Finnish education.

In terms of the three concepts of democracy, equality and human rights within this thesis, it is important for NGO practitioners working within Finnish education, teachers, academics, and policy-makers alike to develop tools on how to discuss democracy, equality and human rights within their different fields. The main focus here should be to share insights and reflections on what democracy, equality and human rights may mean within Finland instead of using the other as a systematic example of ‘poor’ practices. It is important to problematize whether tools on democracy, equality and human right within Finnish education can be developed alongside and in conjunction with, intercultural communication (Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014; Dervin, 2016), so teachers and practitioners can be aware of how their utterances can detect and prevent ‘democratic othering’ – othering through concepts such as democracy, equality and human rights.

This thesis has argued that democracy needs to be understood within Finnish education, and beyond, as something to be problematized rather than a mere simplistic answer or soundbite. Actors within Finnish education need to move democracy discourses away from representations about Finnish exceptionalism and Finnish nation branding. One of the ways this can be achieved is by listening to and recognizing the counter-narratives to meta-discourses about democracy within Finnish education. This thesis demonstrates that these discourses do exist therefore social actors within Finland need to prevent the further distancing and tabooing of these discourses.

Like democracy, equality discourses within Finnish education need to be problematized further rather than reflecting an ethnocentrically determined mode of discourse where Finnish education, and Finland generally, is situated as being superior contra to other countries and/or contexts. One of the ways this can be done in education is engaging with Dervin’s (2016) work on self-reflexivity

whereby educators (academics and teachers) can develop tools to critique their own utterances rather than reproducing ethnocentrically determined utterances.

In terms of human rights discourses within Finnish education it is important to move beyond somewhat naïve Eurocentric approaches to human rights. As this thesis shows human rights discourses can engender a positioning ‘us’ and ‘them’. Thus, counter-hegemonic practices that attack such approaches are required to show the instability of human rights as a concept whilst providing a voice for the marginalized and/or the hidden (Dervin, 2016).

One of the sub-themes within this thesis is the necessity to problematize what the intercultural means within the context of Finnish education. It is important for actors within Finnish education to pay attention to Fred Dervin’s work on intercultural education (Dervin, 2016) and intercultural communication (Byrd Clark and Dervin, 2014). This work could help to re-accentuate discourses of democracy, equality and human rights by acknowledging the presence of the other rather than positioning these concepts for the purposes of nation branding. Engaging with this scholarly work can radically internalize these concepts rather than externalizing these representations further.

One of the ways one can do this is through training programmes for current teachers within Finnish education and student teachers within higher education institutions in Finland. For example, Claudia Ruitenburg (2009) drawing on Chantal Mouffe (2005a, 2005b) identifies three practical areas Mouffe’s concept of agonism can be integrated and developed within educational settings. The first notion Ruitenburg discusses is educating political emotions:

‘The emotions relevant to political education are not those associated with a personal sense of entitlement or with a collective based on an essentialist conception of identity, but rather emotions on behalf of a political collective, associated with views of particular hegemonic social relations. Educating the political emotions thus requires the development of a sense of solidarity, and the ability to feel anger on behalf of injustices committed against those in less powerful social positions rather than on behalf of one’s own pride’ (Ruitenburg, 2009: 275-276).

The second notion is what Ruitenburg calls ‘Reviving an understanding of ‘the political’’. Here Ruitenburg demonstrates the necessity for students to engage in debating contra to the belief that education and/or teaching is politically neutral. Ruitenburg argues:

‘the ideal outcome of such a debate is not the personal satisfaction of gain over a competitor, but the articulation of political differences in such a way that the “transformation of existing power relations and the

establishment of a new hegemony” has been brought one step closer (Mouffe, 2005a: 52 in Ruitenburg, 2009:276-277).

The third notion Ruitenburg articulates is ‘developing political literacy’. By this Ruitenburg means the ability to read the political landscape both in its contemporary configuration and its historical genesis (Ruitenburg, 2009). Specifically, for developing agonism in teacher education Ruitenburg argues:

‘this must also go further “upstream” into teacher education: students cannot be taught political literacy by teachers who, themselves, have been educated to believe that the political left/right divide is no longer relevant. Likewise, they cannot be taught political emotions by teachers who do not see the emotions as having a legitimate place in education or public life; nor can they be taught the difference between political, moral, and economic disputes by teachers who do not understand these distinctions themselves’ (Ruitenburg, 2009:277).

Thus, it is important for current teachers and future teachers in Finland to develop tools so teachers can detect and prevent forms of othering within educational settings. Through engaging with the critical work on intercultural education teachers can develop strategies to combat some of the problems arising from the ways Finnish education export and Finnish nation branding discourses situate Finland as being better than other countries and/or contexts. Teachers cannot be naïve to the ways these discourses can be reproduced within classrooms, thus, teachers and students need to take an active role in combatting and preventing discourses which can engender othering.

8 Final remarks

The articles contained in this thesis, and this thesis itself, have used Finnish education as a context to problematize meta-discourses about democracy, equality, and human rights. This thesis has warned against the problems generalizations and assumptions can cause in terms of engendering othering. Although, the Finnish context has been used as an illustrative example I am not attempting to generalize all of the discourses and interlocutors within Finnish education, or the country of Finland, rather the data used and arguments discussed in this thesis are used as a case study for theoretical and practical considerations alike.

In the autumn of 2015 when I started my PhD studies one of the first meetings I had with someone at the University of Helsinki told me ‘no one is interested in researching democracy in Finnish education’. I then went to meet someone at the then Finnish National Board of Education who was involved with democracy and citizenship within Finnish education. That person told me: ‘in Finland we have been doing democracy in education for over thirty years’. Although I did not record these meetings and use the data as part of a paper instantly I was struck by the many voices on the subject matter within the context of Finnish education. To some democracy was an ambivalent term, to others it was seemingly not important, yet, discourses on democracy can be found in media articles, teacher education and training resources, the national curriculum, a wide selection of policy papers, amongst others. In a sense, discourses about democracy were seemingly everywhere and no-where.

As my PhD research continued I found that an increasing amount of people I would talk to were reluctant to discuss democracy, equality, and human rights other than reproducing meta-discourses about the subject matters. Speakers from within Finnish education whom I spoke to not only lacked a critical perspective about democracy, equality, and human rights but seemingly were scared of voicing criticisms against the so-called status quo.

In part, this might have to do with the ways Finnish higher education (for example, the University of Helsinki) is now actively participating in Finnish education export. For example, many of the faculty office spaces are used by education export companies, the university hierarchy continuously plays host to ‘educational tourists’ to Finland, and, actively engages in knowledge exchanges whereby delegations from other countries frequently visit Finnish higher education institutions to learn ‘best practices’. The places and spaces of what once would be understood as research have now become intertwined with, and perhaps

even subordinated to, business. Seemingly, the influence of economic markets over research and education is not only pervasive but is also irreversible.

Further research needs to be conducted on the ways nation branding discourses and education export discourses are constructed as well as their relationships with discursive constructs such as democracy, equality, and human rights. It is important to develop this area of scholarship within the context of Finland and internationally to explore how the semiotics of education export functions in other contexts.

9 References

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